

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-08 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 TRSE-00 /077 W
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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9386

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 3552

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, EINV, ET
SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AT FOREIGN MINISTRY ON BRAIN DRAIN PROBLEM,
AID AND COMPENSATION ISSUES

1. MOFA AMERICAS DIVISION DIRECTOR BERHANE DERESSE
CALLED IN DCM ON AUGUST 11 TO MAKE ADDITIONAL POINT
FOREIGN MINISTER FELEKE HAD ALLEGEDLY FORGOTTEN DURING
AUGUST 9 MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR, NAMELY THAT PMGSE HOPES
USG WILL ENCOURAGE ETHIOPIAN STUDENTS IN US TO RETURN TO
HELP IN DEVELOPMENT OF COUNTRY ONCE THEIR APPROVED STUDIES
ARE TERMINATED. CHAIRMAN MENGISTU HAD CALLED FOR THEIR
RETURN DURING SPEECH AT ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY GRADUATION
CEREMONIES ON JULY 29, AND FOREIGN MINISTER HAD BEEN
INSTRUCTED TO MAKE REPRESENTATION TO AMBASSADORS OF ALL
DONOR COUNTRIES.

2. DCM ASSURED BERHANE THAT EMBASSY HARED PMGSE CONCERN
OVER BRAIN DRAIN, TERM BERHANE USED, AND IN FACT HAD SENT
CABLE ONLY A COUPLE OF DAYS EARLIER URGING RETURN OF
STUDENT AT UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA WHOSE GRADUATE STUDY
PROGRAM HAD BEEN EXTENDED UNILATERALLY BY UNIVERSITY
WITHOUT REFERENCE TO USAID/E AND THROUGH THEM TO PMGSE
COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION. BERHANE EXPRESSED
APPRECIATION FOR EMBASSY SUPPORT. INTERESTINGLY, BERHANE
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MENTIONED -- PROBABLY ON HIS OWN -- THAT PMGSE WAS NOT ASKING
FOR US TO RETURN STUDENTS FORCIBLY.

3. BERHANE WENT ON TO NOTE THAT FOREIGN MINISTER'S HAVING
DEVOTED TWO HOURS TO MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR TWO DAYS
EARLIER WAS, IN HIS OPINION, EVIDENCE OF SERIOUSNESS WITH
WHICH PMGSE REGARDS ITS RELATIONS WITH USG. TO HIS KNOWLEDGE,

THIS WAS SOMETHING OF A RECORD. IN REPLY TO HIS QUESTION OF WHAT INTERPRETATION EMBASSY HAD GIVEN TO MEETING, DCM REMARKED THAT WE HAD SAME INTERPRETATION TO LENGTH OF MEETING AND WE HOPED IT WOULD LEAD TO CONCRETE PROGRESS, PARTICULARLY ON ISSUE OF COMPENSATION WHERE TIME IS OF A SPECIAL PREMIUM.

4. AT THIS POINT, BERHANE LAMENTED THAT KALAMAZOO PROPOSAL HAD NOW CAUSED TOO MUCH CONTROVERSY AMONG PMGSE TO REACH ITS POLITICAL OBJECTIVE. AMBASSADOR'S INTENTIONS WERE NOT IN DOUBT, HE INSISTED. PULLING BACK A LITTLE FROM HIS EVEN GLOOMIER PREDICTIONS A WEEK EARLIER, BERHANE INDICATED THAT THERE ARE TODAY PEOPLE WHO DO UNDERSTAND IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMPENSATION, FURTHER AID, AND IMPROVED BILATERAL RELATIONS. OTHERS UNFORTUNATELY HAVE BLINDERS ON AND ARE DETERMINED TO EXTRACT PAYMENT FROM KALAMAZOO DSPITE OVIOUS GREATER ADVANTAGES TO ETHIOPIA IN MONEY TERMS OF THE "WASH" PROPOSAL. HE HOPED WE MIGHT COME UP WITH ANOTHER FORMULA FOR SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS ON COMPENSATION. DCM REITERATED WE ARE NOT WEDDED TO KALAMAZOO PRPOSAL PER SE AND SUGGESTED THAT PMGSE TAKE INITIATIVE IN FINDING SOME OTHER CASE OR CASES IT THOUGHT MIGHT LEND THEMSELVES TO PROGRESS. WE WOULD CERTAINLY HELP ON OUR SIDE, DCM ASSURED HIM, AND THEN SUGGESTED CASE OF STERLING DRUGS AS ONE THAT MIGHT BE WORTH LOOKING INTO AS STARTER.

5. BERHANE SEEMED IN A MORE RELAXED MOOD THAN USUAL
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AND CAN PROBABLY BE COUNTED ON TO CONTINUE TO PUSH, AT LEAST GENTLY, FOR PROGRESS ON COMPENSATION WHICH HE, PROBABLY BETTER THAN ANY OTHER ETHIOPIAN OFFICIAL UNDERSTANDS, IS AN ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENT TO CONTINUING AID AND TO IMPROVED RELATIONS.
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